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**Testimony for the  
Education Committee  
Jennifer Widness, President  
Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges  
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On behalf of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges I am submitting testimony on three bills before you today:

- **SB 1197: AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**
- **HB 6884: AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION**
- **SB 1199: AN ACT CONCERNING EQUITY IN EDUCATION**

By way of background CCIC is the association that represents the fifteen private, non-profit colleges in Connecticut. Collectively our member institutions enroll over 80,000 students in Connecticut annually. They award nearly 50% of the bachelor's degree earned in the state each year and over 60% of the graduate degrees earned. Over 70% of the students that attend our institutions who are Connecticut residents stay in state after graduation.

**1. SB 1197: AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

CCIC supports sections 2 and 7 in this bill, which encourages the expansion of dual credit opportunities in Connecticut.

Section 2 encourages local boards of education to partner with higher education institutions to create dual credit pathways in healthcare fields. Goodwin University has been working diligently in this area and recently received support through the state's CT Health Horizons grant program to expand opportunities such as these. Other CCIC institutions may be interested in this work as well. CCIC member institutions award [60% of the health professions degrees](#) – bachelor's and higher -- earned in the state annually.

Section 7 requires the State Department of Education to work with higher education institutions and other stakeholders to expand dual credit opportunities by:

1. creating resources, such as an online inventory of dual credit and dual enrollment programs and model agreements to promote information sharing between boards of education and institutions of higher education;
2. providing support for curriculum development and professional development for teachers and faculty to create new career pathways for in-demand industries; and
3. offering tuition assistance for students who enroll in dual credit and dual enrollment programs.

Hundreds of Connecticut high school students are currently enrolled in a wide range of our member institutions to earn college credit. For example:

- [University of Bridgeport](#) offers business and STEM pathways for high school students to earn up to 30 college credits at \$50 a credit.
- [University of Saint Joseph](#) offers a range of courses designed to give high school students an opportunity to engage in a rigorous college experience, while earning credits which can be applied toward a college degree. Students are eligible for up to one free course per student.
- Goodwin University offers hundreds of students the opportunity to earn college credit in advanced manufacturing through its [Early College Advanced Manufacturing Pathway](#) program.
- Beginning this year, [Mitchell College](#) and New London Public Schools are partnering to provide dual enrollment to New London High School students. In addition, enrolled NLHS students will receive a Mitchell identification card, which will enable them to access the Mitchell College library and dining hall and events of interest (such as athletics and performing arts).

We are eager to support state efforts to expand this work and provide opportunities to more Connecticut high school students.

## **2. HB 6884: AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION**

CCIC opposes sections 4-6 of this bill which seeks to prohibit all institutions of higher education from continuing to utilize the existing preservice performance assessment that was recommended for use by the State Board of Education in 2016 – EdTPA – and mandates that the public colleges in state create a *new* preservice performance assessment that *all* institutions must then adopt.

State statute requires that education preparation programs be accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP). CAEP requires that Educator Preparation Programs (“EPPs”) utilize statistically valid and reliable preservice assessments for teacher preparation programs. EdTPA meets this standard for CAEP and it is what the majority of CAEP accredited institutions utilize. Prohibiting the use of EdTPA will put our education preparation programs out of compliance for accreditation.

Further, Section 5 of this bill mandates that the *public colleges* develop a new preservice assessment by 2025 that then *all* – public and private – preparation programs must adopt that assessment for implementation six months later (in Section 6).

It would take significant time and resources for our state’s institutions to create a valid and reliable performance assessment that would then need to be approved by our national accreditor and our state. Further, it is not appropriate for our public higher education institutions to be tasked with creating an assessment that our private colleges be required to use. That is not their role. In addition, independent institutions will require resources to support the implementation of a brand-new assessment that is state mandated.

Our recommendation is that the State Department of Education – in partnership with higher education institutions, public and private, conduct a study to analyze the landscape in this area to

determine: 1) whether a new assessment is needed; 2) is there another nationally recognized assessment being utilized (or designed) that might suit everyone's needs; and 3) what are the costs, human resources and appropriate timeline for creating a preservice assessment that has input from all stakeholders.

In addition, regardless of the outcome of that study, we ask that institutions continue to be allowed to utilize the edTPA as a valid, reliable, and appropriate preservice performance assessment. Some of our graduates may seek employment out of state which require edTPA for initial licensure and therefore we should have the option to continue to use this tool.

### **3. SB 1199: AN ACT CONCERNING EQUITY IN EDUCATION**

Section 1 of this bill requires the State Department of Education to establish an educator apprenticeship initiative, in partnership with the Department of Labor.

CCIC supports this concept and has teacher preparation programs at our member institutions that have already reached out to SDE and DOL to indicate their interest in engaging in this work, following President Biden's announcement of this new designation for apprenticeship opportunities last summer.

As such we should ask that line 12 be amended to strike "public" and allow that SDE partner with a public or private institutions of higher education to establish apprenticeship opportunities in Connecticut.